

# **More gifts of grace promised**

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.  
(James 4:6)

**Sermon preached at**

**The Strict Baptist Chapel  
St David's Bridge Cranbrook**

**On Lord's Day Morning 28 April 2024**

*By  
Pastor Rowland Wheatley*

Seeking for the help of the Lord, I direct your prayerful attention to the epistle of James. James chapter 4 and verse 6. But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. James 4 verse 6, and there's more gifts of grace then, promised.

We read in our reading in Ephesians chapter 2, how that it is by grace that we are saved, and even while we were sinners, yet Christ died for us, and we were given grace in Christ before the foundation of the world.

Everyone that is born into this world, is born in sin, and shapen in iniquity. We are lost, we are ruined, we are fallen in Adam, we are under condemnation. And apart from the intervention of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, all must perish eternally. But in the covenant of grace, in the agreement between the father and the son, it was an agreement that the son would die and put away the sins of a people that the father gave to him to redeem.

And this he did by taking a body like our own body and soul like those who had sinned and for coming into this world born not by natural generation, but by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, and that in a perfect life and obedience to his father, our Lord then laid down his life a ransom, and suffered in the place of his people. He has made the balances right, as concerning them. He has taken away the sentence of death. He has taken away that condemnation. He's made a way that he can show mercy, and a way that he can give saving grace to his people.

And that saving grace changes them, gives them a new heart, gives them the new birth, gives them to be new creatures in Christ. It has a very differing effect upon them, it changes them, changes their heart, renews the will and turns the feet to Zion's hill as hymn 76 says. The effect of grace is actually able to be seen. That is why when they believed at Antioch, and Barnabas was sent from Jerusalem he saw the grace of God and was glad. You cannot actually see that secret inner working of the Spirit and the gift of grace.

The gift of life, the gift of power from above, that does the changing, that enables a sinner to do what he cannot and will not do of his own. You can only see it by its effects, by their fruits ye shall know them.

Some of us in our gardens, we might use a fertilizer on the plants. We might dissolve it in water. All we see is a watering can with water in it. Is it real fertilizer? Will it do the plants good when you put it on it? And then wait a week or two, and then you see all the flowers, you see the new growth, you see the flourishing, you see the effect. And, though you might not, at that point, see the fertilizer, the water, yet the effects are ongoing.

And so it is with the grace of God. God gives grace at the beginning, but we need that same grace to sustain that change that has been wrought in us right through our lives. Otherwise, we go back, we revert back to what we were, we backslide, we end up taking up with the same sins, the same fallen nature, drifting into the same spirit of the world, and it becomes just as if we had no grace at all. It would be like someone first having a garden or allotment, and they come as I did when I first had the allotment and find it all overrun with weeds and all in ruin and much hard work needed to make it fruitful.

You get a beautiful garden, and it produces a lot of fruit. But unless you keep on at it, unless you keep tending it and weeding it and caring for it, it will go back to what it was.

Several years after I'd given up that allotment, I went back and had a look, or just recently just had a look, and it's just a ruin. The whole area is just overrun with weeds. You'd never believe it had ever looked like some of the photographs I've got when it was flourishing as a fruit producing garden.

And it's all because it had not been continually tended, and we are like that as well. We need to sit under the word, we need the grace of God, we need the continuing grace from the Lord. No man, says the Lord, can keep alive his own soul. It is the Lord that keeps it alive, and he uses means. And it is the same grace that he's given at the beginning, that all the way along the way maintains the difference that was first made by grace.

Never think that the Lord would begin a work of grace and then hand it over to us, or just leave it and let it go its course. It will just return again. But the Lord continues; “he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.” And so the word before us this morning is a word really of encouragement to those that may see many things in their lives that are not right, or where we have backslidden, where it doesn't answer to grace. And yet here is a picture of a soul, a soul that is acknowledged as being God's people, and yet doesn't look like God's people at all.

And if this was our soul, we might come to the conclusion, well we are not God's children, and there's no hope, and we never ever have had grace. But the message this morning is he giveth more grace. And it is that message that we need, and to be encouraged that in the Lord is a full supply of grace, of help, to all of those for whom he has died, for whom he has already quickened. He has that in store that he is able, willing to give to them that they might live lives to his honour and glory, and that instead of sin having dominion over them, that they're able to rise above it and to be delivered and to live in the fear of the Lord.

And so I want with the Lord's help to look this morning, at three things concerning our text in keeping with the context.

**Firstly**, a picture of a person walking without grace and yet saved. And for that picture, we go to the verses that are above our text. Verses 1 through to 5 of chapter 4 of James.

**Secondly**, the remedy, the gifts of grace, more grace in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our text, He giveth more grace. Looking at the characters that he gives it to. Not the proud, but to the humble.

**Thirdly**, the path set before us that God gives grace to follow. We are not just to be idle and careless and say well, I'm just going to walk in this graceless way until the Lord forces me and changes me. No.

The Lord will set before us what is the right way, and as we endeavour to walk in it, he will give grace to do those things which of ourselves we could not do or would do with a wrong spirit.

**So then, our first point**, this picture, walking without grace in exercise yet saved. And that is what is here, you wouldn't think so really, Looking at these first verses in chapter 4. There's wars and fighting among them, and they're traced to lusts, that war in our members. And there's a lusting yet having not, you killed, you desire to have, cannot obtain. What a conflict.

What a warring. What a striving. But in spite of all this, there's still a semblance of religion. You know Paul, when the Lord began with him, he prayed behold he prayeth. So, the picture is here, these people are still praying. They're still asking, but they're not receiving. And the reason is they're not asking rightly, they're just asking to consume it on their lust. Their religion has grown so low that instead of seeking those things to grow in the knowledge of the Lord and to live to his honour and glory they are using prayer just for what they can get out of the Lord. An insurance policy or a new house or those things that are good for the flesh. And they're coveting the things of the world and the friendship of the world that is enmity with God.

Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do you not think do you think that the scripture saith in vain, the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? The old nature. It envies, it covets, it wants those things that the eye sees and goes after those things that pleases the old nature. It will always do that. But the grace of God that saves, seeks after different things.

Things that are above, things that are the Lord's, things that are not of this world, seeking that world that is to come. Now this is a terrible picture, isn't it?

You say, how can that picture a child of God? How can it picture of one who is changed? And yet we have these letters. Letters written to the churches, these epistles, and they are to a saved people.

You look at the epistles to the Galatians or to Corinthians especially. They're written to those that are saved and yet those churches were by no means perfect. But Paul doesn't say to them, because I see those things that are so wrong, you're not one of the Lords. The Lord never begun with you. No.

He points them to the source that first changed them and tells them that they need more grace. How does this picture our lives? Are we more likely to look at our lives and throw up our hands and say there is no hope? The children of Israel often did that. When the prophets Jeremiah and others came and preached repentance to them, they said there's no hope.

We're just going to go on in our own way. And if we've been trying in our own strength to do these things, we'd be right to say there's no hope. While we're looking for help there, there is no hope. No help in self I find, says the hymn writer, and yet have sought it well. The native treasure of my mind is sin and death and hell.

Here is a picture of a heart, without that maintaining grace, without being tended or receiving that help. Like the vine branches not being united to the root, not receiving the sap. And it is a terrible picture. It's a picture of those who are really going back to the way of the world.

You know, we read in Ephesians 2, you hath quickened or made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins. And how were they once walking? "Wherein time past he walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Among whom also we all had our conversation in time past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath even as others." Then he speaks of the change, but those first verses of what they once were and how they walked, doesn't that look like the picture that we have here in James? Yes, it does.

There are the wars, there are the lust, there is the worldliness, there is the adulteress and adulteresses. And going back and needing more grace.

You know the text is a ray of hope, isn't it? "But he giveth more grace." However black your life may look. Look at your prayers, look at how you're acting, look at those conflicts with brethren perhaps, those envying's and the lusts of our flesh, and it is working in so powerfully in our hearts. You think, however can God dwell here, is there anything in the word of God that addresses my soul that comes anywhere near to my case? That comes low enough. That gives any hope to one that is so sinful and corrupt and vile as I am.

Well, the text does give that hope. It does set before us the remedy to want to go from this picture, this sad picture, this picture that you may view as looking in the mirror of your life or mine and to see the remedy.

**So, our second point, the remedy.** Gifts of more grace, but he giveth more grace.

That is a gift of grace. Grace is the free unmerited favour of God. God giving to a sinner his free unmerited favour and help that will produce the same separating effects from the world, the same holiness, the same godliness, as at the first and what answers to where that grace has come from.

And so, just this word of our text, what a beautiful promise to lay hold on, he giveth more grace. In Psalm 84, we read, they shall go from strength to strength, every one of them appearing in Zion.

Years ago, it was described to me in this way, which was such a help to me. They are given strength. They use all of that strength up, so no strength left. And then the Lord gives more strength. So, they're going from one strength to another strength.

The world will describe going from strength to strength, as getting stronger and stronger, but God's people don't feel that. They're given grace, and

then they need more grace. They use it up. We're used to that, aren't we? In our meals, we have our breakfast, but come midday, then our bodies are saying we want some more sustenance.

And that is worked out through our lives. If that is so naturally, and God says that man shall not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. We need that word, we need the word of his grace, we need that power from above. We cannot just go on independent of it, and so this is a beautiful promise.

Now we look back to where the Lord first changed our heart, where he first gave us saving grace, and the things that were done then.

You know, in the letters to the churches in Asia, in in the book of Revelation, chapters 2 and 3, we have a church that left its first love. A church that was exhorted to remember the first works and to repent. And you have the picture here. Remember the first works, remember when grace was first given, remember the change that was wrought, remember what God did then. He is still the same.

The grace is still the same, but he giveth more grace. You want to just go back to what you had years ago; he will give it now. And we need it now. But he giveth more grace. May we really lay hold upon this.

This is not taken grace, it's given grace. But it's given to a specific character. And in our text, we have, 'God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble'. If we're arrogant, if we're proud, the Lord does not give that grace and help. What is there to be proud of in the first five verses of this chapter? Nothing. Everything to be ashamed of. What is there in our life to be proud of? When we see it in God's light, everything to be ashamed of.

Pride is one of the root sins of man. Wherever pride is, there'll be trouble, there'll be contention. Wherever there is humility and lowliness, there are the peacemakers, there are those that God will give grace to. Mark that. Pride is a very deceitful thing. It dresses up in all sorts of ways, as if it was something virtuous, something good.



But pride in our wisdom, our understanding, pride in our opinion. Seest thou a man full of his own conceit there is more hope of a fool than of him, so persuaded that he is right, he's better than his brethren, more hope of a fool than him. He does not feel the need of grace, and he won't be given it. He doesn't feel his need of it.

Really, in our text, the Lord gives grace to those that feel their need of it.

And yes, it may be we must come and say, Lord I am proud. I have a proud heart it rises up. The hymn writer says, "the heart uplifts with God's own gifts and makes even grace a snare." Oh, wasn't I humble, proud even of our humility? My prayer was like the publican's prayer, not the Pharisee's prayer. Proud of our humility, proud of our service, proud of our hearing, proud of our tithing, our giving, proud of our life, proud we're not like someone else is. We measure ourselves by someone else, by a standard other than God's holy, pure, and upright law. So, we may have to confess that we are proud.

Now remember this, the remedy is a gift, a gift of grace, we don't deserve it.

And it is to those that come before the Lord feeling that they don't deserve it. Low before his feet, humbly before his feet, begging of him, seeking it of him. Seeking it for the right motives, that given grace, we might live to the honour and glory of God. Knowing what a blessing it is to have a good hope through grace, a life answerable to God's work in us, and to be numbered with those that live for another world and live for the Lord's honour and glory. This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.

Are those in verses 1 to 5 showing forth the praise of God? Are we showing forth the praise of God in our lives or not? Not just including or thinking of the things outward, but what about our heart, our thoughts, our minds?

**Well, I want you to note then, thirdly,** the path set before us that God gives grace to follow. We said in the naming the three points, that we're not just to sit idly by and to think, well, God must give me grace, otherwise I'm not going to walk in the ways of the Lord. No, we are to seek to be walking in the right ways of the Lord and seek for God's grace to rightly walk in them.

Over in Holland, they use bikes a lot. Many of those bikes are electric bikes. Those that cycle with them, they don't have to wear a helmet. Because the only way that the electric power will go to the wheels is if they are pedalling. If the police saw someone going along on the bike, and they were sitting there not pedalling at all and yet the bike was powering along, they would pull them over and say they need to be registered and they would need to wear a helmet.

The way it works is a bit like the power assisting on our cars. A lot of us wouldn't realise today as we put our foot on the brake. It's not our effort that is putting the power to the brake pads. What we are doing is opening up valves and the vacuum from the inlet to the engine is pulling on a diaphragm and pulling the brakes on, or it may be hydraulic as well, that is increasing the force so that we are gently pressing, but a great amount of pressure is being put on the brakes, power assisted brakes.

When I first started to drive, there wasn't power assisted brakes, and you had to stand on your brake pedal and push very hard. But now we are so used to it. All cars have power assisted brakes. The bikes are like that as well.

Suppose someone sat on the bike and they looked at this hill in front of them and said I could never pedal up that hill. I just can't, and they just sat there and didn't do anything. Meanwhile, another person said, I know I can't, but if I try then may be I can. And of course, as soon as they tried and start to turn the pedals, then the electric motor kicks in and then they're able to go up that hill. But it's only as they actually are making that effort and are trying to do it.

We read in another place, grace to help in time of need. I've laid help on one that is mighty. It is the lord giving that help and giving that strength. When he was to heal the lepers, go show yourself unto the priest. They didn't stand there and say, Lord we have leprosy, we're leprous. We can't go to the priest. We need to be cleansed before going. They went, and as they went, they realised they were cleansed.

Another case was the man with the withered hand. He stretched it forth as he was commanded, and his hand was healed. What if he had just said no I can't, it's withered, it's impossible. But he didn't. He ventured, he stretched it forth, and as he stretched it forth, he received the strength, he received the help.

And so it is with grace, and so the context and what follows our text gives us seven very clear directions as to what we should be looking for that God will give us grace to do. Seeking to walk in these ways.

So as much as we have before our text, that very sad picture of without grace, so after our text we have a different picture, and that should be the way we should be endeavouring to walk and seeking that the Lord would give grace and give help to walk in that way.

**The first thing** that he has set before us in verse 7 is **submission unto God**. Submit yourselves therefore to God. What a vital thing to have grace to do. Maybe it is we've got afflictions and sicknesses, maybe we've got a small fellowship, maybe we've got adversaries and troubles, things that we cannot understand, things that we know, that God who is in control, has appointed these things, but we fret and we kick and we do not want to be in submission to it.

But here is something we need, grace. You know, the apostle Paul, he had the thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him. And he sought the Lord three times that it might be removed. But the Lord said, no, my grace is sufficient for thee. And he was given that help to bear that thorn.

So dear friends, if we come this morning, and the thing that is really making us not look like a Christian, not like look like a child of God, that thing

whereby we are not submitting to God. May we seek that we might submit, and might bow before the Lord, and seek for grace to do so. Lord, help me to submit to thy hand, to thy arrangement, to thy providence. So that is the first thing, submission to God.

**The second is a resisting of the devil**, also in verse 7. Resist the devil, and there is a promise he will flee from you. We need that grace. How often we are so willing to follow Satan's temptations and ways. Why? Because it falls in line with our old natures. What our old nature loves and likes. But the Lord would say to those whose lives are returning to what they once were before they were called. Those that are now ending up Satan's slaves. No, you resist the devil. And you seek for grace and hope that the Lord will help you to do that. Not just to go and follow him at every temptation and every whim that he sets before you, as if you had no resistance at all. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. There's the grace of the Lord that is to be given.

**The third thing is drawing nigh to God in prayer.** Verse 8. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. We might think we're so far off from the Lord, our prayers are so hard, our prayers are so cold, we cannot pray, we cannot go and pray, we cannot even try to pray.

But we'll just see what hard hearted prayers will do. Draw near or draw nigh to God. That is in the attitude of prayer. Our Lord said go into thy closet and when thou hast shut thy door, pray unto him that is in secret he shall reward thee openly. All of us as Christians must know that prayer has something to do with receiving help and grace from the Lord, surely. Prayer must be an indicator of our spiritual life.

Prayer must be the channel that helps and blessings from God come. And yet in the earlier part here, they were praying, but wrongly asking and receiving not because they're asking amiss.

Then let us examine and look at our prayers and seek grace that we might pray as we once did when we were first called. Pray according to the scripture, perhaps taking some of the Psalms, the beautiful prayers of the

Psalms, and making them our prayers. Drawing nigh unto God. If you and I desire and feel the need of more grace, then we will be coming to the throne of grace.

**The fourth thing is cleansing.** Also verse 8. Cleanse your hands you sinners and purify your hearts you double minded. In other words, there's three things. Cleanse hands and hearts and minds.

That summarises our whole life, doesn't it? What we do, how we act, those things that God sees, those things that men see, and our hearts, that which only God sees, but is the spring and source of all what we do. With the heart man believeth. With the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Out of the abundance of the heart man speaketh.

It is the heart that is the spring of our actions. And then our minds, Paul, when he writes to the Philippians, dwells a lot on this, on what things we are to think. How our minds are to be rightly trained, rightly guided in the things of God. In chapter 4 of Pauls epistle to the Philippians, directs to prayer and supplication, (our previous point) with the promise that the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Then he gives those things to think on, things that are true and honest, things that are just and pure, things that are lovely, things of good report, if there is any virtue or any praise.

If we ran our thoughts through that sieve, how many thoughts would get caught in it? And yet how many we indulge and go along with, as if there's nothing harmful in them.

So cleansing, if we seek grace, and you might say, yes, I desire grace that I might be cleansed. There might not be the vile thinker or a heart that's casting up uncleanness or is doing things that are so wrong. Well, the Lord says through James, the Holy Spirit says through James, that there is this cleansing work, and that we are to endeavour to do it, seeking the grace of God so to do.

**Then the fifth thing we have is our attitude** in verse 9. Instead of laughter and joy, while we are in such a worldly carnal state. Be afflicted, and mourn,

and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, your joy to heaviness. Let your demeanour reflect what you really see and feel is the nature and condition of your soul.

**Then in the sixth place, humility**, verse 10, Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and he shall lift you up. This is one of the things that is in our text, God resisteth the proud but giveth grace unto the humble. It is a work. Day by day, if we seek the grace of God and the fruit and effect of grace in our lives, it is a humble way, the same as our Lord Jesus Christ walked. A humble way.

**Then in the seventh place, Speak not evil**. verse 11. Speak not evil one of another. How many things come forth from the mouth? And he's a little member. James speaks of this, and yet it brings forth so much trouble. It's like the rudder on a ship, and he can turn about the whole ship, and so just a few words are spoken, but what effect they can have.

Some of us have known what it is where someone has spoken just one or two words to us, and it's cast us down so much. But maybe you think the other way, have we spoken a few words to someone else, and we have been a source of grief and sorrow to them, and cast them down. What power words have, whether to encourage, or discourage, or whether to stir up in us or in others, all manner of evil.

If grace be given, and this is what is promised in our text, he giveth more grace. Then won't this be the effect? Wouldn't this be a beautiful picture, a different picture than the first five verses? A picture of a humble person that is submissive to the will of God, and when Satan comes in, he resists him. Seeks in their walk, and what they do, and how they think, and in their hearts that they might be pure and clean.

And that they are like their master, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. They're mourning over their sins, and after him, humble before the Lord. A humble and a quiet spirit. And on their lips is the law of kindness, gentleness, loveliness. Wouldn't that be a picture of grace?

Wouldn't that give honour and glory to God? Wouldn't that show forth his praise? But he giveth more grace. Our old nature is more than a match for us, too much of a match. We need the Word of God to show us what grace given looks like, what the Lord delights in, and the way that we should desire to walk in.

And we need the Word of God to tell us this is not our work; this is God's work. This is not your power, it's my power. This is God working in you to will and to do of his own good pleasure.

This then is a beautiful promise, But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

May we walk in this way and the Lord grant us his grace, more grace, to his honour and glory. Amen.

## **Sermon summary**

This sermon emphasises the importance of God's grace, not only in giving eternal life at the new birth, but also to enable us to continue to live a life to the glory of God.

The Text is a promise of being given more grace.

It emphasizes the need for us to endeavour to walk in the ways that we know we will need grace to do so.

James gives seven ways we are to seek to walk, in the five verses after the text.

Walking in submission to God, resisting the devil, drawing near to God in prayer, cleansing of hands, hearts, and minds, mourning over sin, humility, and speaking no evil.

The key message is that God gives more grace to the humble and those who seek to walk in His ways.